

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General Goddard and ADEQ Director Owens Announce ASARCO to Pay \$77,500 Penalty for Air Quality Violations in Gila County

(Phoenix, Ariz. - April 19, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens announced today that ASARCO, Inc. will pay a \$77,500 penalty under a consent judgment with ADEQ for air quality violations in Gila County.

In September 2005, ADEQ inspectors discovered that loose tailing dust had collected throughout the mine's tailing pond area and witnessed dust emissions from the Hayden Mill facility, a violation of ASARCO's air quality permit. ADEQ issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to ASARCO in October 2005, which required the company to keep the tailing pond area damp or encrusted to minimize dust emissions. Under the NOV, ASARCO has applied a dust suppressant designed to control future dust problems at the site.

The ASARCO-Hayden Mill facility mainly produces copper with some production of sulfuric acid for use in the mineral extraction process. This settlement resolves the dust violations at the facility from 2005 and 2006. The dust emissions caused an exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for particulate matter in January 2006.

"Production of dust from the mine site can cause respiratory and other health problems," Goddard said. "ASARCO and other dust emitting industries are required to maintain these types of tailing ponds to protect Arizonans' health and welfare. When they don't, they must face the consequences."

"ASARCO must operate its facility in accordance with the law and ensure that its tailings do not become airborne and present a risk for citizens who live near this facility," Owens said.

The consent judgment is subject to court approval.

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